

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02  
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R 161242Z FEB 78  
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AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS CAIRO 05163

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EG IS US PEPR  
SUBJECT: ARMS SALES AND PEACE

SUMMARY: EGYPTIAN PRESS CONCENTRATES ON ISRAELI PROTEST  
AGAINST PROPOSED AIRCRAFT SALES. SURPRISINGLY, NO MENTION  
OF FACT THAT USG FOR FIRST TIME HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED  
ISRAELI ARMS REQUEST. EDITORIALY, PRESS POSITS ISRAELI  
OPPOSITION TO ARAB ARMS PART OF EFFORT DISRUPT PEACE  
PROCESS. U.S. CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL SEEN AS RULING  
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OUT EARLY PEACE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS FEB 16 DOMINATED BY ISRAELI REACTION TO PRO-  
POSED AIRCRAFT SALES TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. REPORT-  
EDLY, GOI AND PRO-ISRAELI LOBBY HAVE LAUNCHED "FURIOUS  
CAMPAIGN": F-5E SALE OPPOSED SINCE EGYPT IN STATE OF  
WAR WITH ISRAEL; F-15 TRANSFER ATTACKED BECAUSE SAUDI

PILOTS DEEMED UNABLE OPERATE AIRCRAFT, RAISING POSSIBILITY AMERICAN "MERCENARIES" MAY BECOME INVOLVED IN DOGFIGHTS WITH ISRAELI PILOTS. PAPERS QUOTED PM BEGIN'S KNESSET CRITICISM OF U.S. DECISION, WHICH "CONSTITUTES THREAT TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE." PRESS NOTED BEGIN WILL ASK CARTER TO RECONSIDER SALES DURING MID-MARCH VISIT TO WASHINGTON. (PRESS ALSO CLAIMED TRANSFER OPPOSED BY USSR AND RADIO DAMASCUS.)

2. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S AFFIRMATION THAT DECISION FIRM, TAKEN IN VIEW EGYPTIAN AND SAUDI DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS, AND TO MAINTAIN REGIONAL BALANCE SO THAT PEACE EFFORTS MAY CONTINUE PROMINENTLY REPORTED. PAPERS ALSO FEATURED SPOKESMAN'S DENIAL THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USG , AND ISRAEL WOULD HINDER PEACE EFFORTS.

3. EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, FEB 15, CLAIMED SADAT'S VISIT TO U.S. AND EUROPE ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES: CAUSED CHANGE IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION; RESULTED IN FURTHER EUROPEAN SUPPORT; AND INFLUENCED JEWISH LOBBIES ON BOTH CONTINENTS. SPOKESMAN WARNED NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE "LONG" AND PATIENCE WILL BE REQUIRED TO CONFRONT DIFFICULT ISSUES AHEAD. IDENTIFIED THESE AS DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING THESE) AND PALESTINIANS' RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

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4. EDITORIALS. AKHBAR CLAIMED ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO AIRCRAFT SALES PART OF SCHEME DISRUPT PEACE PROCESS. PAPER DENIGRATED CLAIM THAT TRANSFER WOULD AFFECT REGIONAL MILITARY BALANCE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW PROPOSED SALE MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT TO ISRAEL. ISRAELI INTENTION, SAID AKHBAR, IS TO REDRAW MAP OF MIDDLE EAST FROM POSITION MILITARY SUPREMACY.

5. IN SEPARATE ARTICLE, SAME PAPER NOTED PROPOSED SALE TO EGYPT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE SINCE IT IS FIRST A/C SALE TO FRONT LINE COUNTRY EVER PROPOSED BY U.S. PRESIDENT (SIC). SALE WILL ENABLE U.S. "TO MOVE OUT OF ZIONIST SIEGE." NEVERTHELESS, ROAD AHEAD LONG AND DIFFICULT; ZIONIST REACTION WILL BE SHARP, "EVEN VIOLENT"; AND NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF EARLY PEACE. IN FURTHER EDITORIAL, AKHBAR SAID SOVIET OPPOSITION TO PROPOSAL RESULT OF USSR'S PIQUE AT EGYPT'S FINDING NEW SOURCE OF SUPPLY. EILTS

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES, PEACE PLANS  
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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014